



## Office of the County Manager

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### MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 18, 2012

TO: Wake County Board of Commissioners

FROM:  David Cooke, County Manager

SUBJECT: February 20, 2012, Board Meeting Control Room Incident

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information about the incident that occurred in the video production/control room during the Monday, February 20, 2012 Board of Commissioners meeting.

Staff compiled the attached situation update in response to questions that arose following the incident and has added the most up to date information in response to your request during the Board meeting on Monday, April 16, 2012.

#### Attachments

CC: Dave Goodwin, GSA Director  
Scott Warren, County Attorney



## Public Affairs Office

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## **SITUATION UPDATE: Board Meeting Incident on Feb. 20, 2012**

**April 17, 2012**

### **CONTEXT**

- Wake County has a contract with Sound Advice for live audio/video production and broadcast of our County Commissioners regular business meetings, on first and third Mondays of the month at 2 p.m.
- Sound Advice subcontracts a portion of these responsibilities to Velasquez Digital Media Communications (VDMC). These responsibilities consist of operating the equipment in the control room to remotely access video cameras in the boardroom, control and switch graphics and sound, and monitor live broadcast feed to public access television station RTN.
- Veda Renfrow works freelance and has been contracted by VDMC and worked in the Wake County control room for several years.

### **DESCRIPTION OF INCIDENT**

According to those present in the control room during the broadcast and taping of the Wake County Commissioners Regular Business Meeting on Monday, February 20, 2012:

1. There are two positions in the control room, operating the camera system and operating the Character Generator. On February 20, 2012, Veda Renfrow was responsible for operating the character generator equipment. During the meeting Ms. Renfrow attempted to take control of the camera system to capture video of a crowd of vocal protestors that were unhappy with a board decision. When requested by County staff to leave the camera equipment alone, Ms. Renfrow became angry and refused, using extremely profane language.
2. The normal procedure for the staff operating the cameras is to go to wide shot for a vote, and then return the camera shot to the chair when he or she has resumed the meeting and is moving on to the next agenda item, which was the case.
3. The County Staff Supervisor in the control room regained controls by requesting Ms. Renfrow to relinquish the controls of the camera, to act professionally and regain her composure. She responded with vulgar language and continued to act unprofessionally.
4. Ms. Renfrow eventually returned to her assignment for that meeting (to operate the character generator equipment), but continued to act inappropriately to the County staff supervisor.

A Sound Advice employee also witnessed and overheard Ms. Renfrow's vulgar remarks and actions. Ms. Renfrow eventually calmed down and finished the meeting; however, the Sound Advice employee told the County Staff Supervisor that he would let the Sound Advice owner know what had happened and that Sound Advice would address the situation.

5. The next day the County Staff Supervisor documented the incident and emails were exchanged between Wake County and Sound Advice (see attached email messages).
6. Sound Advice
  - 1) apologized for Ms. Renfrow's actions,
  - 2) said that they had determined that her job performance was unacceptable,
  - 3) said that they would address the issue and
  - 4) find a replacement for Ms. Renfrow.
7. Sound Advice addressed the situation with their subcontractor for Control Room Operations, VDMC, who in turn removed Ms. Renfrow from the Wake County project.

#### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

We understand that VDMC offered Ms. Renfrow work in another location, and that she refused the assignment.

Wake County's discrimination policy has been requested by the news media, however, the county's policy does not apply to contractors and therefore has no bearing. The standard Wake County contract does not speak explicitly to a discrimination policy, however, it does reference the following language:

***V. RELATIONSHIP OF PARTIES: Provider is an independent contractor of the County. Provider represents that it has or will secure, at its own expense, all personnel required in performing the services under this Agreement. Such personnel shall not be employees of or have any contractual relationship with the County. All personnel engaged in work under this Agreement shall be fully qualified and shall be authorized or permitted under state and local law to perform such services. It is further agreed that the Provider will obey all State and Federal statutes, rules and regulations that are applicable to provisions of the services called herein. Neither Provider nor any employee of the Provider shall be deemed an officer, employee or agent of the County.***

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**From:** Timothy R Tuck  
**To:** Kelli A Braunbach  
**Subject:** Fw: Commissioners Meeting on February 20 2012  
**Date:** 04/17/2012 02:11 PM

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Timothy R. Tuck  
Reprographics Coordinator  
General Services Administration  
Ph: 919-856-5747  
Fax: 919-856-6478

----- Forwarded by Timothy R Tuck/Wake County on 04/17/2012 02:11 PM -----

**From:** Thomas R Holt/HS/Wake County  
**To:** Dave L. Goodwin/GS/Wake County@Wake County, kbraunbach@wakegov.com  
**Cc:** Timothy R Tuck/Wake County@Wake County, Thomas R Holt/HS/Wake County@Wake County  
**Date:** 02/21/2012 04:45 PM  
**Subject:** Fw: Commissioners Meeting on February 20 2012

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FYI. Please see note from David Evans below. I will update Kelli at our meeting in the am, but wanted to pass this along to you both. Included below is the original documentation of the event from Tim Tuck.

thanks  
Ray

----- Forwarded by Thomas R Holt/HS/Wake County on 02/21/2012 04:42 PM -----

**From:** David Evans <devans@saenc.com>  
**To:** trholt@wakegov.com  
**Date:** 02/21/2012 09:57 AM  
**Subject:** Re: Fw: Commissioners Meeting on February 20 2012

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Hey Ray, I did speak with Dearl last night about the situation. I had him follow up with an email, which is in line with what Tim sent you. Feel free to give me a call at your convenience. I have an appt around 10:30 and then will be tied up from 2:30 on. I will be glad to talk to you about it.

In the meantime, let me first offer a sincere apology from me as well as Monique. She and I have spoken, and she will be addressing this issue on her end.

Monique has been instructed to provide a replacement for Veda, and agreeably notes her behavior was inappropriate and unprofessional. She assures me we will not see Veda in that capacity again. In the future, we will ensure each individual is briefed on what their role is and is not during these meetings. I will be following up with Monique to ensure we have appropriate coverage for the next meeting.

David

On Tue, Feb 21, 2012 at 9:29 AM, <[trholt@wakegov.com](mailto:trholt@wakegov.com)> wrote:

hey man. Dearl may have already discussed this with you..... I'm not sure. Before I update Dave and Kelli, I wanted to hear back from you. I'm headed to a 10am meeting downtown..... so just shoot me a note, or I can call you later today.

thanks

Ray

----- Forwarded by Thomas R Holt/HS/Wake County on 02/21/2012 09:27 AM

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From: Timothy R Tuck/Wake County  
To: Thomas R Holt/HS/Wake County@Wake County  
Cc: [droughton@saenc.com](mailto:droughton@saenc.com)  
Date: 02/21/2012 09:24 AM  
Subject: Commissioners Meeting on February 20 2012

#### Commissioners Meeting on February 20 2012

There was a problem at the Commissioners Meeting concerning one of the staff workers who is contracted by Sound Advice. Veda Renfrow who helps run the controls for the commissioners meeting became enraged and out of line during the Feb 20 2012 meeting.

It was a sensitive issue that the commissioners were discussing that upset her, I knew this subject was personal to her and I tried to comfort her and asked her throughout the meeting to keep her personal feelings aside and be professional and do her job.

Unfortunately, after a vote by the Commissioners Veda Renfrow became enraged and was trying to persuade the lead Camera man in the control room to take the camera shots off the Commissioners and focus on the crowd, I told Brent the camera man to put the camera shot back on the commissioners and I told Veda that she was out of line and for her to keep her personal feelings in check. Veda Renfrow then replied with vulgar language that she did not care what I thought or about her job.

I spoke to Dearl Roughton of Sound Advice who contracted the company that Veda works for and who witnessed this action by Veda Renfrow, I felt Veda jeopardized the integrity and safety of the Commissioners and the Commissioners meeting and I wanted her replaced, Dearl Roughton agreed.

Timothy R. Tuck  
Central Services  
GSA

Timothy R. Tuck  
Reprographics Coordinator  
General Services Administration

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